

# THE GULL



GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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MARCH 2004

FOUNDED 1917

## 2003 Christmas Bird Count Results

**O**akland. At 2 a.m. December 14, 2003, the wind was howling, and rain was sheeting down. Looking for owls was hopeless; so we went back to bed. But by 5 a.m., the wind had abated and the sky was beginning to clear. So we went owlng.

It was a very good day. Oakland had 153 observers in the field, 7 more than last year. They found 179 species, 3.5 more than the 10-year average. Nice weather during the day contributed to finding 84,325 individual birds, 20 percent more than last year. Still, this total was 20,000 less than the prior 10-year average (104,615). Despite our nasty pre-dawn conditions, owlers found all five of our normal species, although numbers for all but Great Horned Owl were very low.

Among our more common diurnal species, we found all-time high counts since 1974 for **Brown Pelican\***, **Black-necked Stilt**, **Forster's Tern**, **Rock Pigeon**, **Nuttall's Woodpecker**, **Black Phoebe\***, **Common Raven\***, **Brown Creeper\***, and **Townsend's Warbler**. For the asterisked species, 2003 numbers were about 50 percent (or more) higher than the previous high count. All-time low counts since 1974 were set for **Black-bellied Plover**, **Semipalmated Plover**, **Ruddy Turnstone**, **Brewer's Blackbird**, and **Pine Siskin**.

Unusual species were two species never recorded before. The North Boat found a male **Harlequin Duck**, and the Oakland Airport crew found two **White-faced Ibis**, which won Best Bird Prize at the Countdown dinner. Three count areas found a total of 17 **Wild Turkeys**, up from one last year. The North Boat also found a **Long-tailed Duck**. A skein of **Brant** flew by the Bay Farm Island group. The Siesta/Gateway Valleys group found a **Long-eared Owl**; the only other record was in 1974. The Tilden North group saw the juvenile **Yellow-bel-**



Bill Mast (l) and his son Bruce Mast (r) head out just before dawn to count birds on Bay Farm Island.

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Katy Raddatz / The San Francisco Chronicle

## Quail Recovery Plan Wins Support

**A**fter nearly three years of negotiation, the San Francisco Commission on the Environment has unanimously endorsed a plan to restore California quail habitat in San Francisco, with the goal of increasing the city's nearly extirpated quail population. The Commission's vote was a major win for Golden Gate Audubon, which initiated the concept to create quail-friendly habitat in San Francisco parks and pursued creating a plan despite some strong opposition.

The final Quail Recovery Plan is a collaborative effort by Golden Gate Audubon, open space advocates, defenders of feral cats, and the SPCA, with guidance from the San Francisco Department of the Environment. The plan identifies ways to bring California Quail back to San Francisco's parks in co-existence with other activities and animals and human recreation needs. It identifies four quail recovery sites: Lincoln Park, Strybing Arboretum, McLaren Park, and Harding Park Golf Course—where quail were once numerous but are now rarely seen.

The city's quail population has nearly disappeared due to increased development and clearing of brush that the birds need for suitable cover. Through the Quail Recovery Plan, habitat improvement will be assessed through surveys, maps, and monitoring in areas where quail currently live, and at each relocation site. The plan also calls for city departments, community based organizations, and other stakeholders to estab-

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 15, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Society membership is \$20 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. Monthly meeting: second Friday in the West Bay; third Thursday in the East Bay, 7 p.m.

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# Reflections on Christmas Bird Count

I have a secret to confess: I am not an experienced birder. I have adored birds all my life and have observed them through binoculars—more since I joined Golden Gate Audubon last May—but I am not a real birder. On wildlife-watching trips, I am typically the one saying, “Where is it? Where?” And I certainly can’t tell a Yellow-rumped Warbler from a California Towhee.

Participating in the December Christmas Bird Count was my third official birding trip. As a beginning birder, I was nervous, but I knew that in the company of birding experts Luke Cole and John Luther, I would be in good hands. I expected an enjoyable day of bird-watching—an opportunity to learn to identify a few birds and perhaps to see some species I had not seen before. But I did not expect anything magical to occur.

We began our count with the turkey vulture roosts, and our leaders easily identified scores of specific songbirds based on their calls alone. I tried to learn some of the calls, but when the answer to each of my inquiries was “Anna’s Hummingbird,” I began to despair. It was a glorious morning, and I enjoyed observing new species—and learning the critical importance of having a good pair of binoculars (borrowed from John Luther).

But the day’s highlight was seeing for the first time a male Anna’s Hummingbird perform his ritual flight to attract the female. Throughout the morning, our leaders pointed out the distinctive, high-pitched chirp that marks this aerial dance, but it took us several hours before we were able to spot a male performing it. We could see the male hovering high above, pausing several seconds before beginning his ascent. Up, up...and then the unique, J-shaped swoop, marked by a staccato chirp before the branch where we supposed the female perched.

There is something remarkable about watching this tiniest of birds—barely visible in the gardens of Oakland’s Dunsmuir House—sing his heart out in the hopes of perpetuating his species. Such a tiny fragment of nature, with such a critical role to play. His strong, urgent voice captured our rapt attention.

Bay Area bird conservation is itself a microcosm of global environmental protection—so many different species, filling a variety of niches, each playing a vital role. Our job as environmentalists is to ensure that we don’t lose any of these species, not even the smallest ones.

Christmas Bird Count reaffirmed for me the wonder of birds and the importance of our mission. And in that hummingbird’s song, I also recognized the importance of each individual activist voice. Hundreds of Bay Area birders joined together to count birds in December. Their individual observations are compiled and sent to a national database, which tracks trends in bird populations nationwide and helps to shape conservation efforts.

As the new year progresses, Golden Gate Audubon is launching a strategic planning process, examining ways to make our work yet more effective—from our conservation campaigns to our education programs. Every individual voice is central to our success. No voice is too small, and whether you are a seasoned activist or a beginner, your role in our ongoing effort is critical.

by Elizabeth Murdock, Executive Director

## Bylaws Revisions Approved; 2004 Election Scheduled

In January 2004, Golden Gate Audubon members approved the revised Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws recommended by the Board of Directors. At its January meeting, acting under the new Revised Bylaws, the Board fixed the size of the Board at 17 Directors (one more than the current number). Of the seventeen, 9 will be elected by the members; the other 8 will be appointed by the elected Directors. Since the terms of three of the current elected Directors extend for one or two more years, there will be 6 positions open in the 2004 election. The election will be held by written ballot printed in the April Gull, with a ballot deadline in May.

# Rusty Scalf, Passionate Teacher

**F**or those of us who thrive on Golden Gate Audubon weekend birding trips, having a leader like Rusty Scalf makes these outings a quality experience. Several weekends a month, Rusty leads trips either for Golden Gate Audubon or as a part of the popular birding class he co-teaches at Albany Night School.

"For me," says Rusty, "the most gratifying thing by far is teaching birding to beginners. Having people come up and thank me years later is the best feeling I know. A number of my former students have become active in ways that really makes a difference for conservation. It seems the more people know and understand about nature, the more willing they are to work on nature's behalf."

Rusty's beginnings as a birder date back to when he was 12 years old. "I saw a Townsend's Warbler in my front yard and I got a good look at it," he recalls. "I wanted to know what I had seen. So I went to the public library and asked the librarian. She took me to a field guide and we figured it out. That's how I got my start."

"I love nature and natural history," he says. "Right now, I have a real longing to learn more about plants and all other life forms. Teaching birding is just wonderful. Like vitamins for me. I think teaching is what really keeps me going."

As part of his continuing education of birds and natural history, Rusty traveled to Alaska for a bird-filled adventure last summer. "I was invited on a private boat out of Kodiak Island into the Gulf of Alaska," he says. "The purpose was to find Short-tailed Albatross and Mottled Petrel, and to gather data on what was out there. It was great. Pairs of us did hourly watches in rotation. We saw the Albatross, but not the Petrel. Parakeet Auklet and Thick-billed Murre were new for me. I could not get over the thousands of Puffins. Both species were abundant. Even 35 miles out to sea, there were foraging puffins everywhere."

"From Kodiak I took the ferry back to Homer and birded the Kenai Peninsula to Seward. Then took the train back to

Anchorage. The Fjord Cruise out of Seward to Fjords National Park is fantastic. The boat pulls up alongside seabird colonies swarming with Red-faced Cormorant, Kittiwakes, Murres and both Puffins. We saw Kitzlitz Murrelet among the ice floes where a glacier breaks up into the ocean. Wonderful. The train ride from Seward to Anchorage is spectacular as well."

"Something that impressed me about Alaska, and Kodiak in particular," Rusty notes, "is what a warbler factory it is. Birding in the East Bay Hills, I am

surface. A highly recommended trip."

Rusty is now organizing a unique trip this spring for Golden Gate Audubon. "Like many who spend time outdoors," he says, "I have been aware of Sudden Oak Death (SOD) disease in all too many places. My field trip idea began on a recent Golden Gate Audubon trip I led to Pt. Reyes. I car-pooled with a young man who is building a Web-based application for ordinary citizens to report Sudden Oak Disease. Since birders are in the field far more than the average person and tend to be keen observers of the



As you can see in this photograph from the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) in Oakland, Rusty Scalf is no novice birder. Every year, he participates in multiple counts. From the Oakland CBC in December, he traipsed to the Monterey Bay pelagic count, the Palos Verdes count in Los Angeles County and the Pinnacles count in Santa Clara. Had he not taken sick, he would have been at the Angwin (Napa County) and the Panoche Valley counts, as well!

happy to run into a single family of begging Orange-crowns or Wilson's in a day. On Kodiak Island there were begging Yellow and Wilson's fledglings everywhere. Astounding densities. In one hike I took near Homer, I ran into families of Myrtle, Townsends, Yellow, Wilson's and Orange-crowned. Seems like every 5 minutes I'd find another warbler family. It was a kick to see a Golden-crowned Sparrow fly out of a bush with a fecal sack in its mouth; to be bombarded by a nesting Greater Yellowlegs; to go through the scores of Arctic Terns bringing home fish, to look for an Aleutian Tern (we found several); and to surprise a Spruce Grouse and her chicks. The sheer abundance of life in Alaska is fantastic. And of course I was south of Anchorage the whole time, and so just scratched the

natural world, my idea is to have a trip led by professional plant pathologists, who will delve into the natural history of SOD and give instruction on proper diagnosis."

Golden Gate Audubon is indeed fortunate to have a person like Rusty with such impeccable birding skills leading our field trips. In his pursuit of ever greater knowledge of the natural world, he contributes enormously to an expanding circle of those keen on understanding and getting excited about nature.

In his professional life, Rusty works for the California Department of Health Services developing computer mapping software for research epidemiologists. He has been leading field trips for Golden Gate Audubon since 1987.

by Susan Groves, Chair Field Trip Committee

**Lied Sapsucker** present since November, and also a **Swamp Sparrow**. The Lafayette Reservoir group found a Swamp Sparrow. Both species had been recorded only once before. Unusual warblers this year included a **Black-throated Gray Warbler** in Berkeley, **Hermit Warbler** on San Pablo Ridge, and **Black-and-white Warbler** at Lake Merritt. Each species has been found in the past. The Mills College group found a pair of **Western Tanagers**; that species has been recorded only once before. An **American Dipper** present in Temescal Creek during Count Week disappeared the night before the count.

This year our 13 feeder watchers reported 50 species, including 2 **White-throated Sparrows** and a **Western Tanager**. One dedicated counter found our only **Barn Owl** in the evening.

We thank Elizabeth Murdock and Kathryn Blake in the Golden Gate Audubon office for their support. John Luther and Luke Cole again served as our Rare Bird Committee.

### San Francisco Count

On December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2003, starry skies greeted early risers participating in the 21<sup>st</sup> San Francisco Christmas Bird Count (SFCBC). The previous evening's deluge may have kept the number of counters down, as only 74 made it into the field this year. In all, 173 species were found among 51,325 individual birds tallied on Count Day, and another five species were spotted during the Count Week.

What many counts have in resident species, the SF Count makes up for in rarities, and this year was no exception. Among this year's rarities were: a **Red-necked Grebe**, uncommon in the bay as far as south San Francisco, and 8 **Northern Fulmars** found by the Presidio team. 41 **Fulmars** were spotted outside the Gate. A first ever for the SFCBC were three **Sooty Shearwaters** seen off Ocean Beach. Bob Hirt's team managed to find "his" **American Bittern** in Sharp Park. For only the second time, a **Bald Eagle** was spotted, on Sweeny Ridge. Waterfowl highlights included 39 high flying **Greater White-fronted Geese** by the

Golden Gate Bridge and our third record for two **Blue-winged Teal** spotted in South San Francisco. One-and-a-half Glaucous Gulls were reported in Colma, and a Glaucous hybrid something Gull in Golden Gate Park for the second year. Hugh Cotter's drawing of the **Pomarine Jaeger** off Sutro Baths was more than adequate, making only the second SFCBC record for the species. Two **Nuttall's Woodpeckers** were reported this year, one at Fort Mason and another on Potrero Hill. **Acorn Woodpeckers** are an eruptive species on the count. Matt Zlatunich and team found a community behind the Conservatory of Flowers in the Park. Kristi Hien located a problematic empidonax flycatcher. Current thinking is it is likely a **Hammond's Flycatcher**, the first one for the SFCBC. **Nashville and Yellow Warblers** are found almost every year, and this year two Nashville were found and a single Yellow at Lake Merced. A **Black and White Warbler** was reported at the Zoo, and Dan Murphy submitted the most humorous documentation, contrasting the black and white striped bird with a zebra. Three **Hooded Orioles** were found at Middle Lake. A **Swamp Sparrow** was well described and illustrated at Lake Merced.

The real value of a CBC is to give a picture of the long-range trends for the area. Some of the obvious trends from SFCBC's

first tally in 1982 are: **Red-shouldered Hawk** from 2 to 40, **American Crow** from 9 to 105 (high 177 in '02), **Common Raven** from 14 to 236 (high 331 in '02) **Steller's Jay** from 8 to 26 (high 33 in '99). Birds in decline include **Pied-billed Grebe** from 239 to 34 and **California Quail** from 124 to 40 (high 139 in '86). Note that the quail number includes birds from San Mateo County; current estimate for San Francisco's quail is about 20.

More information can be found at [www.birdsource.org](http://www.birdsource.org).

This year we were fortunate to have new leaders: Matt Zlatunich, Stefanie Arthur, and Ralph Hunter. Our other leaders were: David Armstrong, Josiah Clark, Hugh Cotter, Kevin McKereghan, Mary Liz Harris, and Robert Lewis, plus our long-time leaders Chris and Ted Koundakjian, Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna, Cindy and Les Lieurance, Bob Hirt, Russ Bright and Jim Weigand. Many thanks to all and to Damien Raffa, Terri Thomas and The Presidio Trust for making the Log Cabin in the Presidio available for our CBC dinner.

Thanks to Susanne Shields who planned, organized and served both countdown dinners, working with Project Open Hand.

Oakland Compilers: Dave Quady and Bob Lewis  
San Francisco Compilers: Alan Hopkins and Dan Murphy

## Call for Volunteers

Golden Gate Audubon is looking for individuals to join our roster of active volunteers. In particular, we need:

**Field trip leaders** for the first-Sunday-of-the-month field trip at Strybing Arboretum in San Francisco. The monthly trip focuses on teaching beginning birders "how-to" techniques for bird identification. Leaders must be willing to make a regular monthly commitment. Anyone interested, please contact Allan Ridley at 415.566.3241 or [allanrid@pacbell.net](mailto:allanrid@pacbell.net). An **experienced birder** willing to spend one hour a month compiling Field Trip Report summaries that will be posted on the Golden Gate Audubon Web site by the webmaster. A **good driver** to help on field trips where Golden Gate Audubon promotes car-pooling. Interested birders and drivers contact Susan Groves at [susangroves@att.net](mailto:susangroves@att.net) or call the Golden Gate Audubon office at 510.843.2222.

**Environmental Education volunteers** to work with elementary and middle-school students as they plant native plants and do other restoration work at Martin Luther King, Jr. Shoreline Park in Oakland. Contact Amiko Mayeno at 510.635.5533 or [amayeno@audubon.org](mailto:amayeno@audubon.org). In addition to willing hands, Golden Gate Audubon also needs **book shelves** for the office. Contact Elizabeth Murdock at 510.842.9912 or [emurdock@goldengateaudubon.org](mailto:emurdock@goldengateaudubon.org).

# PROGRAMS

Ann McTavish



Programs begin at 7:30 p.m. We meet socially at 7 p.m. For more information about upcoming events, detailed directions or updates, please see our web page:  
[www.goldengateaudubon.org/Chapter/programs2003-2004.htm](http://www.goldengateaudubon.org/Chapter/programs2003-2004.htm)

## First Results from the San Francisco Breeding Bird Atlas

*San Francisco*

**March 12**

Mark Eaton

Mark Eaton discusses some initial results from the San Francisco Breeding Bird Atlas Project. During the early 1990s, atlas workers systematically covered San Francisco county in order to document the status and distribution of breeding birds in the county. This talk discusses the results from that census work in the context of natural features in San Francisco and also offers a comparison to similar atlas results from nearby counties. The results are put into context with observations subsequent to the atlas period as well as more global environmental factors for migratory species.

Mark is President and Cofounder of the San Francisco Field Ornithologists, an organization dedicated to a detailed understanding of identification and systematics of birds in San Francisco and beyond. He has been a birder for over 20 years and has led trips for Shearwater Journeys and Golden Gate Audubon. He is a contributor to the effort to complete the written portion of the San Francisco Breeding Bird Atlas, a draft of which may be found at [www.sffo.org](http://www.sffo.org).  
County Fair building, Strybing Arboretum, Golden Gate Park, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way  
Directions: [www.strybing.org/visiting/page2.html](http://www.strybing.org/visiting/page2.html)

## Restore the Bay Campaign

*Berkeley*

**March 18**

Mike Sellors

The San Francisco Bay Restoration Program is a partnership of the eight local Bay Area Audubon chapters, Audubon California, and National Audubon. While there have been accomplishments in saving the Bay, it is time to begin the work of restoring our natural commons—the largest and most ecologically significant estuary on the Pacific Coast of the Americas. It is a crucial bird habitat, a vital fishery, a major shipping center, a source of precious water, a playground for its cities, a natural treasure in trouble, and a stirring challenge to our human stewardship.

In *San Francisco Bay: Portrait of an Estuary* (University of California Press, October 2003), John Hart's lyrical writing and David Sanger's 155 eye-opening color photographs reveal this marvel hidden in plain sight—its varied past, its complicated present, and its promising future. Mike Sellors, Policy Director, Acting Director, SF Bay Restoration Program, will update us on the Restore the Bay campaign. Pre-signed copies of the book will be available for \$28, 20% off the list price of \$34.95. Photographer David Sanger may attend.  
Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda between Solano and Marin  
Directions: [www.northbrae.org/directions.html](http://www.northbrae.org/directions.html)

## Where in the World Have You Birded?

Have you ever wanted to tell others about your birding trips? Been curious where other birders have traveled? Wondered where in the world to take your next birding adventure? If you answered yes, we hope you'll participate in Golden Gate Audubon's new world map project, which pinpoints the sites where our members have birded.

Just send us a letter, postcard, or email listing the countries, U.S. states and particular areas where you have birded, and we'll mark the locations on our map. Our goal is to illustrate the variety and popularity of sites Golden Gate Audubon members have visited. You may wish to include multiple, specific locations within a country or state to help us know where to place markers on the map. And if you send a picture postcard from a birding site, we'll display it on our bulletin board.

We look forward to hearing from you and representing you on our map. Come have a look at our birdiful world!

*Golden Gate Audubon's world map was generously donated by member Marilyn Nasatir to adorn the wall in our conference room. She also designed the project. Thank you, Marilyn!*

## Golden Gate Audubon Membership Dues Go Up

Effective April 1, 2004, Golden Gate Audubon Society is increasing the annual dues for Supporting Members (those who belong to Golden Gate Audubon in addition to or instead of the National Audubon Society). Following is the schedule of membership rates.

**Student: \$20**

**Individual: \$25**

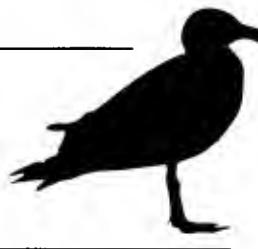
**Family: \$40**

Benefits of being a Supporting Member include:

- One-year subscription to *The Gull* (10 issues)
- 10% discount on purchases at our nature store in Berkeley
- Access to field trips and monthly programs
- Discounts on eligible classes and events
- Volunteer opportunities
- Knowledge that 100% of your dues go toward local conservation and environmental education programs.

# FIELD TRIPS

Susan Groves



## Free, Drop-In Birding for Children

*Strybing Arboretum, San Francisco*

**Saturdays, March 6 and April 3**

San Francisco Nature Education Leaders:

Nancy DeStefanis, Angie Geiger;

Strybing Arboretum Docent: Darin Dawson

415.387.9160, info@sfnature.org

Meet at the main gate near the Strybing Bookstore at 10 a.m. Bring binoculars if you have them and a pencil. This birding tour and nature hike for children tromps through the exciting microhabitats of the arboretum. Ages 7 and older. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Trip ends at noon.

*Co-sponsored by San Francisco Nature Education, Strybing Arboretum Society and Golden Gate Audubon Society.*

## Rush Creek

*Marin County*

**Saturday, March 6**

Leader: Bob Lewis

510.845.5001; Rlewis0727@aol.com

Meet at 8 a.m. for a half-day trip. We will examine the marsh alongside the road and then hike along the oak woodland. There will be ducks, swallows, some raptors and woodland species, and perhaps shorebirds. Take Hwy. 101 north to Novato. Exit at the last Novato exit, Atherton. Follow the signs toward the airport. When you get on the frontage road on the east side of the highway, you will see a Marin County open space area on your right. Park nearby.



## Strybing Arboretum

*San Francisco*

**Sundays, March 7 and April 4**

GGAS co-leaders: Allan Ridley, Rick Ferrick;

Strybing Arboretum Docents: Linda Lyons,

Helen McKenna. 415.566.3241

Meet at 8 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum for this regular first Sunday of the month half-day trip. See January *Gull* for details. Beginners and all others welcome.

## Biking along East Bay Shoreline

*Alameda County*

**Sunday, March 7**

Leader: Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233

(no calls after 9 pm), kathy\_jarrett@yahoo.com

An all day bicycle trip on the Bay Trail from Aquatic Park in Berkeley to Richmond Marina Bay, including the Albany Crescent and Point Isabel areas. Leaders will return by bicycle along the Bay Trail mid- to late afternoon, but it is possible to return by BART. Bring sun screen, lunch and liquids. There is a small store/café at Richmond Marina Bay where food/drink may be purchased. Bicycle helmet required. Rain cancels.

From San Pablo Ave. in Berkeley just south of Ashby Ave., turn west toward the bay on 67th St., then right on Bay St. (the extension of Shellmound St. in Emeryville) just past the train tracks and go straight to the end, past Potter St., to a small parking lot on the right. Watch out for busy traffic here as cars are going toward the freeway from Bay and Potter.



## Wednesday at Arrowhead Marsh

*Alameda County*

**Wednesday, March 10**

Leader: Courtenay Peddle, 510.532.8911

(no calls before 9am), capedaddle@there.net

Meet at the parking lot at 9:30 a.m. to study and enjoy the wintering birds. Up to 14 species of ducks and perhaps Clapper Rail. Heavy rain cancels. Bring scope if you have one. All levels of birders welcome.

Take I-880 south to Hegenberger and then west on Hegenberger to Doolittle Drive. Right on Doolittle, right onto Swan Way. Left into MLK park. Drive to end for Arrowhead Marsh parking lot.

## Honey Lake and Greater Sage-Grouse

*Lassen County*

**Saturday-Sunday, March 13-14**

Leader: Dave Quady

510.704.9353; davequady@worldnet.att.net

We will search Lassen County for Greater Sage-Grouse, Bald Eagles and other wintering birds of the Eastern Sierra. Trip is limited to the first 20 participants. Detailed directions will be provided to those who are confirmed on the trip.

## Briones Regional Park

*Berkeley*

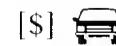
**Saturday, March 13**

Leader: Rusty Scalf

510.666.9936; rscalf@jps.net

Meet at 8 a.m. at the Bear Valley Rd. entrance to the park for this half day trip. First parking lot inside the park. We will look for winter birds in oak savannah, Oak-Madrone-Bay woodland and grassland habitats.

From Orinda, go north on Camino Pablo. Turn right on Bear Creek Rd. 4.5 miles, then right into the park.



## San Francisco Bird Blitz

*San Francisco*

**Saturday, March 20**

Leader: Alan Hopkins

415.644.0983, ash@sfo.com

In this annual blitz we expect to tally over 100 different species within the City limits. This year, we look to exceed all previous records. Meet at the north end of Van Ness Ave. (past North Point, the last cross street) at the foot of Municipal Pier at 7 a.m. We will caravan to other sites including Golden Gate Park, Sutro Baths, Lake Merced and Candlestick Point. Bring snacks, lunch and liquids. We will bird until dusk, then adjourn to a restaurant for dinner.



Contact Susan Groves, Field Trips Committee Chair, at 510.654.5954 or susangroves@att.net:

- if you can share a ride or if you need a ride,
- if you have difficulty reaching a leader and need information,
- if you have suggestions for trips, or
- if you are interested in leading a trip.

**key**



Carpool



[\$] Entrance fee required



Biking trip

## **Arrowhead Marsh**

*Alameda County*

**Sunday, March 21**

Leader: Bruce Mast, 510 435 1371 (no calls after 9 pm), [bmast@alumni rice.edu](mailto:bmast@alumni rice.edu)

Meet at 9 a.m. for a 3 hour stroll. We will look for waterfowl and shorebirds, including some in breeding plumage. Clapper Rail and Burrowing Owl are possible. Bring a scope if you have one. Beginners welcome.

Take I-880 and exit at Hegenberger Rd. Head west and turn right at Doolittle Drive. Right onto Swan Way, left into MLK Shoreline Park. Follow the park road to the end



## **Coyote Hills Regional Park**

*Fremont*

**Saturday, March 27**

Leader: Anne Hoff  
510.845.5908, [Anne2210B@aol.com](mailto:Anne2210B@aol.com)

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Visitor Center parking lot for this half day trip. Coyote Hills is a unique park with fresh water marsh and salt pond habitat. We should see ducks, shorebirds, wintering songbirds, raptors. Bring lunch and liquids. Beginners welcome. It may be muddy. Heavy rain cancels.

From the East Bay take I-880 south to Rt. 84/Dumbarton Bridge exit. Turn right and continue west. Exit on Paseo Padre Pkwy. Turn right and continue north one mile, left on Patterson Ranch Rd. to Coyote Hills.



## **Presidio Bird Walk**

*San Francisco*

**Sunday, March 28**

Leader: David Armstrong, 415.305.7681(c); [darmstrong99@yahoo.com](mailto:darmstrong99@yahoo.com) (email preferred)

Meet at 7:30 a.m. in front of the former Public Health Hospital accessible at the end of 15th Avenue near the intersection with Lake St. We will look for overwintering birds and early spring arrivals and will be birding different locations in the Presidio including the restoration site at Presidio Hills, Kobbe and Upton, Crissy Field, LF Polin Spring, Inspiration Point and Mountain Lake Park. We will be covering up to 6 miles on foot with approx. 1000 feet of total elevation gain. Trip ends around noon.

## **Bay Trail/Richmond Service Trip**

*Contra Costa County*

**Saturday, April 10**

Leader: Jeffrey Black 510 526 7068; [chipmunk1003@aol.com](mailto:chipmunk1003@aol.com) Call to reserve 20 spaces available

Help out in the new native plant nursery, transplanting seedlings and other tasks, and learn about the marsh restoration project underway along the south Richmond shoreline. We'll end the morning with a walk out to the Bay Trail to view shorebirds. This event is co-sponsored by Aquatic Outreach Institute, an environmental education non-profit organization based on the University of California's Richmond Field Station. Light refreshments will be provided; some gloves and tools are available, but you may bring your own. Heavy rain will cancel. Meet at 9 a.m. at the UCB Richmond Field Station, 1327 South 46th Street Gate #2.

From Berkeley, take Hwy 580 towards Richmond and exit at Bayview Avenue. Turn left at the signal and go over the highway. At the stop sign, go straight. Follow the road about a quarter mile, past the curve. Turn left at 47th Street (there is a left turn lane), and then take an immediate right across the railroad tracks, into the Richmond Field Station. (47th Street is poorly marked. Look for the end of the iron fence on your left. If you reach the freeway entrance, you've gone too far.) The main gate will be closed, so turn left and follow the dirt road to gate #2. Once on the Field Station, turn right, then immediately another right. The plant nursery will be in front of you, just past the bend in the road.

## **Palm Springs, Morongo Valley and Joshua Tree National Park**

**Thursday, April 29–Sunday, May 2**

Leader: Rusty Scalf  
510.666.9936; [rscalf@jps.net](mailto:rscalf@jps.net)

This three day trip should provide excellent opportunities for viewing desert and oasis birds as well as spring migrants. We expect to see Vermillion Flycatcher, Summer Tanager, Yellow-breasted Chat and many desert species such as Roadrunner, Black-throated Sparrow and Verdin. Trip limited to 15 people. Contact leader to reserve space. Our proposed itinerary is as follows.

**Thursday, April 29.** Fly out of Oakland for Ontario Airport on Southwest Airlines #2058. Rent two vans at the airport and drive to Palm Springs and stay there overnight.

**Friday, April 30.** Spend the morning birding Palm Canyon—the afternoon at Native Conservancy Coachella Valley Preserve. Overnight in Yucca Valley.

**Saturday, May 1.** Bird in Morongo Valley, Covington Park. Big Morongo Canyon might be the finest area in California for viewing spring migration.

**Sunday, May 2.** Bird Joshua Tree National Park. Return to Oakland on Southwest Airlines #1028 leaving Ontario at 7:05 p.m.

We'll try to get a date shake at Hadley's. Note: Any storm activity to the south may result in a migrant fallout, and we will keep our schedule flexible. Local birders will be consulted.

## **Yosemite's Bird Life**

*Yosemite National Park*

**Friday–Sunday, June 4–June 6**

Leaders: Dave Quady, 510.704.9353; [davequady@worldnet.att.net](mailto:davequady@worldnet.att.net); Bob Lewis

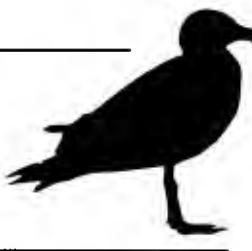
The lower and middle elevations of Yosemite National Park are alive with singing birds in early June. A variety of habitats supports a rich diversity of bird life, typically including seven flycatchers (four Empidonax), three vireos, seven warblers, and many other species in full song and breeding plumage. Meet at the large parking lot just inside the Hwy. 120 (Big Oak Flat) entrance to the Park, 30 mi. from Yosemite Valley on Friday, June 4, at 3 p.m., and at 7 a.m. on Saturday, June 5, and Sunday, June 6. On Friday afternoon we will bird for a couple of hours and perhaps look for owls later. On Saturday we will bird all day and look for owls in the evening. (If you arrive later Saturday morning, meet the group in Hodgdon Meadow, below the Hodgdon Meadow Group Campsites. On Sunday we will bird until about 3 p.m. Bring warm clothes, rainwear, rubber boots (wet meadows) and a large flashlight for owling. Bring a lunch and be prepared to walk about three miles each day.

Nearby campgrounds include Hodgdon Meadow and Crane Flat in the Park; reservations required 800 436 7275, and Forest Service campgrounds Dimond O on Evergreen Road, the road to Hetch Hetchy, and Sweetwater on Hwy. 120. Lodging or near Hwy. 120 includes Yosemite Westgate Lodge 800.253.9673, Evergreen Lodge 800.935.6343, Yosemite Riverside Inn 800.626.7408 or [yosemiteriversideinn.com](http://yosemiteriversideinn.com), and Yosemite Lakes 800.531.1001.



# OBSERVATIONS

January 1-31, 2004  
Bruce Mast



**F**or pessimists and rail watchers, the calendar indicated a couple more months of short, cold, rainy days. For optimists and songbird lovers, January brought lengthening days; blooming willows; returning Allen's Hummingbirds; courting Herons, mating Red-shouldered Hawks; singing Wrens, Titmice, and Thrashers; and nest-building Anna's Hummingbirds and Purple Finches. Can spring be far off?

## Loons to Ducks

A Jan 18 visitor at the Pt Reyes Lighthouse (PRNS, MRN) noted a **Yellow-billed Loon** (*Gavia adamsii*) flying south within 200 yards from the whale-watching platform, followed by a comparatively diminutive Pacific Loon (SS). The waters off Crissy Fields, SF, continued to host a Red-necked Grebe throughout the month (HC, PS, ASH). On Jan 4th, at least 3 Brant were seen associating with a flock of Canada Geese at Limantour Estero, PRNS, MRN. (JCS). The region's 2 resident Harlequin Ducks stayed put last month: 1 at Coyote Pt., SM (RST; mob); the other near Chimney Rock, PRNS, MRN (SS). Both have been entertaining birds since last summer. In addition, a female Harlequin flew by Moss Beach, SM, on the 25th (RST). A number of observers reported White-winged and Black Scoters last month. On Jan 29, a Long-tailed Duck joined the Seoter flock off of Fort Funston, SF (HC). Long-tailed Ducks were also reported from Foster City, SM, on the 10th (GD; mob); on Tomales Bay, MRN, on the 15th (RS) and on the Petaluma River, MRN/SON, on the 27th (RLe).

## Raptors to Alcids

For much of the month, Ryer Island, SOL, was a raptor watcher's fantasy. Visitors to this Delta island reported hundreds of hawks, kites, harriers, and kestrels. Highlights included several Rough-legged

Hawks and at least a half-dozen Swainson's Hawks, most of them juveniles (RM; mob). Rail watchers, on the other hand, studied their tide charts and then made their pilgrimages to Waldo's Dike at Tomales Bay (MRN) and Palo Alto Baylands (SCL). High tides of Jan 19 produced at least brief views of Black Rails at both locations (CC, KL, MRO). Another member of the Rallidae family, a Common Moorhen turned up at Harvey Marsh, SCL, on Jan 13 (BRe, FV).

A Rock Sandpiper was reported on Jan 11 in Bodega Bay, SON (DN). Arriving Jan 9th, a second Rock Sandpiper made it as far south as the Half Moon Bay Golf Course, SM, where it lingered for about 10 days near the 18th hole (GD; mob). Alviso's New Chicago Marsh (SCL) continued to be a hot spot for Ruff, where 4 or more must have spent the month, at least if all age/sex reports were accurate (mob).

The best gull this month had to be a second winter **Lesser Black-backed Gull** (*Larus fuscus*) seen at the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant, SCL, on Jan 14 (BB). From Jan 9-19 the gull flock at the mouth of Pilarcitos/Frennehan's Creeks in Half Moon Bay, SM, hosted a juvenile Glaucous Gull (AJ; RST, DSi). Glaucous

Gull also stopped in at Hayward RS on the 26th (BR). The first week of the month, 15 Black Skimmers remained on their favored island at Charleston Slough, SCL (BB). In the Aleid family, Ancient Murrelets were spied off Año Nuevo SR, SM, on the 3rd (RST) and in Moss Beach, SM, on the 25th (RST, KO).

## Doves to Thrashers

A hiker at Coal Cr OSP off Skyline, SM, was treated to daylight views of Northern Pygmy-Owl on Jan 26th (BB). Burrowing Owls were reported from several bayside locations: on the 6th and 15th at Arrowhead Marsh, ALA (TH); on the 10th in SM, SM (RST; RF, DSi, JM); and on the 16th at New Chicago Marsh and Arzino Ranch, SCL (BB). The Arrowhead Marsh owls had been absent for several years. Ryer Island, SOL, was a great destination for owls as well as raptors, with the highlight being 16 Long-eared Owls in the redwood grove on Jan 10-16 (RM, KA). Four Short-eared Owls were seen patrolling the fields along Grizzly Island Rd, SOL on Jan 19 (AF) and 3 more hunters drew onlookers to the Wavecrest area in Half Moon Bay, SM, on Jan 10 and 26 (GD; mob).

Vaux's Swifts were seen repeatedly the first week of Jan., performing their aerial aerobatics over Las Gallinas Sewage Ponds, MRN (BDB). Lewis's Woodpeckers lingered throughout the month along Alpine Rd, SM, (CMI, JBy, PeM, DA) and in Inverness,



Snow Bunting

MRN (PP). The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker remained in residence at Tilden RP, CC, at least through the 12th (BE, mob).

An Empidonax flycatcher challenged observers in GGP, SF, through the 9th, where it was ID'd at various times as Hammond's, Dusky, and Least (PS, ASH). In MRN, the consensus was that a Hammond's Flycatcher was frequenting the White House Pool in Inverness Park through the 3rd (SJD). A second Hammonds was reported near Stinson Beach on the 10th (DWI). An eastern vagrant, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, spent the week of Jan 24-29 just south of Davis on Old Davis Rd, SOL (CDL, LL, JM, RE). On Jan 14th, a Yellow-billed Magpie strayed out to the coast at Ft Cronkite, MRN (anon.). Two Barn Swallows were out of season over Limantour Beach, MRN, on Jan 18th (DDS) and dozens more over Hayward RS on the 26th were equally surprising (BR). American Dippers explored several Bay Area creeks last month: at L Temescal, ALA, on the 6th (SL); at Alum Rock park, SCL, Jan 10-17 (MRO, mob); and at the Highway 128 bridge below Monticello Dam, SOL, on the 29th (JM, RE). Finally, a Townsend's Solitaire was discovered on Jan 10th in Del Puerto Cyn, ALA (AEd).

## Wood Warblers to Finches

On Jan 16-17, 2 Phainopeplas managed to find some mistletoe at Foothill RP in Windsor, SON (LH, LL, CL, DSh, AW). On Jan 7, a female Summer Tanager spent the day near the PRNS Visitor's Center, MRN (ToH). Out of season Western Tanagers lingered in Strybing Arboretum (GGP, SF) on the 1st (ASH, MZ) and passed through Sunnyvale, SCL, on the 18th (CW).

The SSF (SM) Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, first found in early Dec., put in an appearance at the marsh behind Littlefield Ave on the 18th (MH, RST). Over in ALA, another Nelson's was discovered at Arrowhead Marsh on the 21st and resound on the 25th (TH; mob). ALA birders were additionally treated to a visiting **Snow Bunting** (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) at the San Leandro Marina on Jan 25th and 26th (BR, mob). Just the 2nd county record, its presence overshadowed that of the Mountain

Bluebird in the same vicinity. Over in SCL, a birder got a brief but descriptive look at a probable Indigo Bunting at Charleston Marsh on the 22nd (DWe). Subsequent searches went unrewarded.

We end this month's column with a series of icterid sightings. Iridescent Blackbirds joined blackbird flocks near the Fairfield landfill, SOL, on Jan 14th (JM, RE) and at GGP, SF, on Jan 21st and 31st (JC, SR). A male and 3 female Great-tailed Grackles spent the first week of the month at the Coyote Cr Goff Club, SCL (MM; DWe). Back in GGP, 3 Hooded Orioles spent the last half of the month near Middle L (HC, StH). Also in SF, a Bullock's Oriole in the Presidio, first reported in Dec., lingered through Jan 3rd (PS; JC, PS, ASH).



Harlequin Duck

**Postscript:** a number of birders have asked me how best to submit sightings for this column. The best strategy is simply to post sightings to one of the birding email lists that serve the area (for the list in your area, see <http://fog.cesf.ca.us/~jmorlan/county.htm>) or report the sighting to the Northern California Birdbox at 415.681.7422.

## Wood Warbler Sightings

### Nahsville Warbler

1/4-8	Overfelt Gardens, San José, SCL	MRO, BRe, FV
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1/6	College & Broadway, Oakland, ALA	ST
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1/17	L Merced, SF	HC
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### Black-throated Gray Warbler

1/1-13	Oakland & Grand Avenue, Oakland, ALA	RSm
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1/14-18	Berkeley Aquatic Park, ALA	KA
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1/15-31	Lakeside Park, Oakland, ALA	BEM; mob
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### Black-and-white Warbler

1/1, 15-27	Lakeside Park, Oakland, ALA	ESe, mob
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1/2	SF Zoo, SF	PMC, BK
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1/15-26	Inverness Park, MRN	RS; mob
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### Northern Waterthrush

1/11-28	Charleston Rd Marsh, SCL	AE, MRO; mob
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### Wilson's Warbler

1/17	Kensington, CC	GG
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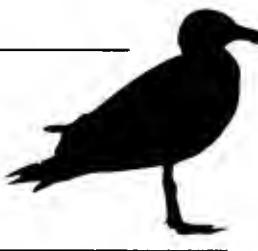
**Abbreviations for Observers:** DA, David Armstrong; BB, Bill Bousman; DB, Dennis Braddy; KA, Ken Archibald; BDB, Bruce Bajema; KB, Ken Burton; PB, Patricia Braddy; CC, Chris Conard; HC, Hugh Cotter; JC, Josiah Clark; LC, Les Chibana, ADM, Al DeMartini; DDS, Dave DeSante; GD, Gary Deghi; JD, Jim Danzenbaker; SJD, Stephen J Davies, AE, Al Eisner; AEd, Art Edwards; MWE, Mark Eaton; AF, Anthony Fisher; BF, Brian Fitch; MF, Mike Feighner; RF, Rich Fernick; RFI, RF; GG, George Griffeth; SG, Steve Glover; ASH, Alan Hopkins; KH, Keith Hansen; LH, Lisa Hug; MH, Mary Haveman; SH, Steve Huckabone; StH, Steve Hampton, TH, Travis Hails; ToH, Tom Howard; AJ, Alvaro Jaramillo; BK, Bill Kennedy; CL, Cindy Lieurance; CDL, Calvin Lou; DL, Don Lewis, JL, KL, Kimya Lambert; JL, LL, Les Lieurance; RL, Robin Leong; RLe, Rick Lebaudour; SL, Stephen Long; BEM, Bruce Mast; CMI, Chris MacIntosh; DM, Dan Murphy; JM, Joe Morlan, KMK, Kevin McKereghan; MM, Mike Mammoser; PM, Peter Metropulos; PEM, Peggy Macres; PMC, Pat McCulloch; RM, Roger Muskat; DN, David Nelson; KO, Kns Olson; BP, Bob Power; JP, John Poole; PP, Peter Pyle; BR, Bob Richmond; Bre, Bob Reiling; JR, Jean Richmond; JRy, Jennifer Ryengwa; MR, Mark Rauzon, MRO, Mike Rogers; SR, Siobhan Ruck; DS, David Suddjian, DSi, Dan Singer; DSh, Doug Shaw, ES, Emilie Strauss; ESe, Emily Serkin; JCS, Juan Solis; PS, Paul Saraceni; RS, Rich Stallcup; RSc, Rusty Scalf, RSM, Robert Smith, SS, Sam Stuart; ST, Sylvia Trinidad; RST, Ron Thom; MU, Myra Urvang, DVP, David Vander Pluym; FV, Frank Vanslager; AW, Alan Wight; AWi, Adam Winer; CW, Chns Wolfe; DW, Denise Wight; DWe, Dave Weber; DWi, Dave Wimpfheimer; JY, James Yurchenco; MZ, MZ

Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = main observers, "oth" = other observers. Information is compiled from BirdBox transcripts and regional listservs. The author apologizes for any errors or omissions.

**Abbreviations for Counties and Others:** ALA, Alameda; BBA, Breeding Bird Atlas; CBC, Christmas Bird Count; CC, Contra Costa; Cr, Creek; Cyn, Canyon; GGP, Golden Gate Park; L, Lake; MRN, Marin; MTY, Monterey; N., N. NAP, Napa; Pt, Point; PRNS, Pt Reyes National Seashore; RP, Regional Park; Rd, Road; Res, Reservoir; RS, Regional Shoreline; SB, State Beach; SCL, Santa Clara; SF, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; SR, SR

# BACKYARD BIRDER

Meg Pauletich



The new year began badly for a Hermit Thrush which had been caught by a neighbor's cat. It looked as if it might make it, but by noon the next day, it had died. Since our local wildlife museum, which rescues animals, was closed, my neighbor had to do her best to keep it going until the museum opened. But, too often, birds nabbed by cats are severely injured or traumatized by the experience and die from shock.

What can you do if you find a bird in trouble? Perhaps a bird has struck your window and is lying there quivering. Once I read that 9 out of 10 birds survives bumping into a window. But, until it can fly away it is vulnerable to predators. One solution is to cover the bird with a colander or sieve while it's recovering. I've also heard that placing it in a sunny spot will help it warm up and get over the shock. Every 15 minutes or so, check on the bird by lifting the sieve. When it has collected itself, it will take off like a jet airplane.

What if you see a baby bird hopping around on the ground or perched on a low branch? He's all alone and is being eyed by a cat. Generally, this is a fledgling which has left the nest but is not an accomplished flyer as yet. This is a dangerous time in a bird's life. He is getting used to life outside the nest. Luckily the parent birds know where the baby is. They are feeding it and are keeping an eye on it. If that cat approaches, stand back and watch the parents go into their attack mode. If the cat is stalking, I would scare it away. It's hard, but try to do nothing at all, as cruel as this may seem. It's not only illegal to raise a baby bird, but it is nearly impossible to succeed. Too many of these little guys are brought into the rescue centers unnecessarily. It's best to leave them in the wild.

If you find a bird with a broken wing, e.g., you may legally transfer it to an

animal rescue center. If you need to know your nearest rehabilitator, call your local Audubon chapter or the Humane Society and they will refer you. Without an ability to fly, the bird is doomed. But some can be saved. The Lindsay Museum in Walnut Creek displays birds which are not mended and cannot be released back into the wild. If you find a sick bird, that is another matter. You may not wish to risk handling it so you can avoid contact with diseases. Report such a bird to the Humane Society



Hermit Thrush

If you find a nestling, that is, a bird with no feathers that cannot hop around, try to return it to its nest, which should be nearby. It's a myth that parent birds will reject a baby bird that has been touched by a human. They do not recognize their offspring by smell.

What do you do if you find a nest with eggs or nestlings in it? If the nest is on the ground, ask yourself if it's supposed to be on the ground. Many species of birds actually nest in this vulnerable place! Towhees, nighthawks, meadowlarks, killdeer and others nest on terra firma. Often the nests are almost invisible as they are so well camouflaged. The parents are probably watching and may even resort to some fabulous acting as they pretend to be wounded in order to distract you and lure you away from the nest.

However, if the nest has blown out of a tree or shrub, it may be impossible to put it back. Adult birds recognize where their nests are and might not be able to find a nest that has been moved. But if there are baby birds in the nest they are more likely to return when they hear their babies' cries. If the nestlings are uninjured, but the nest is damaged, place some nest materials and some dry grass in a shallow container which has small drainage holes punched in its bottom. Secure the nest near its original location. Place the chicks inside and leave the area. Check in a few hours to see if the parents have returned. Use common sense. If you keep checking, the parents may be frightened away, so don't overdo your check-ups.

I have learned that cats should be kept indoors—for many reasons such as their own safety and health. My cat is old and he basically stays in now. Any future kittens will be kept inside. Putting bells on cats does no good—they learn to walk without "jingling." Many, many birds and other wildlife are caught by our pets. A cat's basic instincts are to hunt and kill food. We cannot change that. But we can do our best not to upset the balance of true nature. Be a responsible pet owner.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

lish "guiding principles" to aid in the quail improvement process. Over the next few years, the Recreation and Parks Department and Golden Gate Audubon, working with other community organizations, will plant specific native and non-native brush that provide essential elements such as seeds, leaves, flowers from grasses, shrubs, and tree berries.

It began three years ago when the Commission on the Environment and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors approved resolutions endorsing Golden Gate Audubon's plan to restore California Quail populations in San Francisco. The Supervisors also designated the California Quail the official City bird, adding to its existing status as the California state bird.

With that endorsement, Golden Gate Audubon hired professional biologists to develop a comprehensive quail restoration plan for San Francisco parks and the Presidio. The plan was completed in July 2001. The Presidio program began immediately and has been very successful in its efforts to restore quail habitat in the area of Battery Caulfield.

Our efforts to implement the City parks quail program, however, met with stumbling blocks. When Golden Gate Audubon asked the Commission on the Environment to approve the quail restoration plan in city parks, we were met with vocal opponents. Feral cat advocates thought we wanted to kill feral cats; off-leash dog advocates contended off-leash dogs would be banned in all city parks; eucalyptus tree supporters said our plan would result in cutting down the city's eucalyptus trees. Although none of these allegations was true, the Commission could not reach a decision and asked its Executive Director, Jared Blumenfeld, to bring all the parties together to work out differences.

After several months, Community Boards, a non-profit, conflict resolution group, agreed to mediate. Our first meeting was attended by Jared Blumenfeld, Community Boards mediators Catherine McCracken and Sandra Tuzzo, Nancy Wuerfel representing the feral cat/SPCA advocates, Steve Cockrell of the San Francisco



Volunteers clear brush to help restore quail habitat

Parks Coalition representing the off-leash dog community, and Arthur Feinstein, representing Golden Gate Audubon. While discussions began with people repeating past arguments, Golden Gate Audubon was able to turn the tide by suggesting that the group focus its efforts on the actual, on-the-ground aspects of Golden Gate Audubon's proposed restoration activities. What if we agreed to limit our restoration program to just three or four parks, pick sites that currently have few or no feral cats and that are unlikely to ever be off-leash dog sites, and agreed not to use the quail as an excuse for cutting down trees?

Steve Cockrell immediately proposed that we look at city golf courses, where there are no off-leash dog conflicts, trees are managed for the golf course not for quail, and feral cat colonies are not prevalent. The SPCA agreed to help us resolve the most difficult feral cat issues. Months of meetings and negotiations followed this first session, in which Golden Gate Audubon member Alan Hopkins, who created the Save the Quail concept, joined the team. We all got to know and trust each other and began to move forward. Steve Cockrell took on most of the work to get a final document written and approved.

We identified Harding Park Golf Course as our first restoration site and began work-

ing with the Department of Recreation and Parks, in particular Superintendent Dan McKenna and golf course manager Sean Sweeney, to develop a quail restoration plan. The Department provided maps, led site visits for the negotiating team, helped us establish a plant palette and, allowed elements of the Quail Plan to be incorporated into the ground management plan for the golf course.

After months of writing, editing and meeting, we finally agreed on the Quail Recovery Plan, which the Commission on the Environment approved and also officially incorporated into the Harding Park ground management plan. There was not a single voice in opposition to the plan, and feral cat activists came to the meeting to voice their support.

Golden Gate Audubon extends its appreciation to everyone who took part in this extraordinary process. Jared Blumenfeld, Steve Cockrell, Nancy Wuerfel and the SPCA, and the Community Board staff. It was inspiring to see how these disparate groups came together with a common goal in mind. San Francisco is richer for it, especially if we find healthy populations of quail in City parks in years to come.

by Arthur Feinstein  
Conservation & Education Director

## Donations

Thank you for your generous donations to support our many conservation, education and member activities!

### Golden Eagle (\$1,000 or more)

Anonymous, Robert L. Bennett & Elizabeth Shih, Beryl Ness (*Working Assets employment anniversary award*), Maggie & Contee Seely, I. von der Hude, Susan Witter (*in honor of Ann Witter, in recognition of seven decades of dedication to environment, wildlife and children's education*)

### Peregrine Falcon (\$500 to \$999)

Jane Dang, Harold Kirker

### Least Tern (\$200 to \$499)

David Armstrong\*, Randall & Katherine Erickson, Joseph Ferrie & Madhu Prasher, Alan Harper & Carol Baird, Barbara & Barry Deutsch (*Quail & operating expenses*), Steve & Renee Margolin, Roger Mendelson\*, John & Hortensia Nelson, Audre & Roger Newman, George S. Peyton, Jr., Joanne Sarg Wallin\*

### Clapper Rail (\$100 to \$199)

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Blumberg, Claire Boddy (*with matching gift from Harder+Company Community Research*), Ronald L. Clendenen, Mr. & Mrs. Michael Cussen\*, Margaret Deane, Julian Elliot, Beverlee French, Travis Hails\*, John Hess, Winifred Hess, Leslie E. Lethridge, Cecily & David Majerus, Dan &

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